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Appln. No. : 10/518,219
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REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in the present application. Reconsideration is respectfully requested for the following reasons.

Claims 1-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,979,104 to Brass et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by the Brass et al. '104 patent. Applicant submits that the Brass et al. '104 patent does not disclose every feature recited in these claims. Nevertheless, Applicant has submitted with this Amendment a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 to antedate the Brass et al. '104 patent and thereby remove it as a reference. As will be apparent in the Declaration, Applicants actually reduced the invention to practice prior to the filing date of the Brass et al. '104 patent. Furthermore, while Applicants acknowledge that conception may not be relevant in the present situation, as an actual reduction to practice occurred before the filing date of the Brass et al. '104 patent, Applicants have submitted such information because the date of the drawing in Exhibit A in of the Declaration antedate the filing date of the Brass et al. '104 patent. In light of the fact that the Brass et al. '104 patent may no longer be considered a reference as to this application, this rejection has been rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants submit that all pending claims 1-16 are in condition for allowance and a Notice of such is therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

September 12, 2006
Date

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